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# Pharmacy Elder Abuse Assessment Project

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Introduction

A recent study conducted by Acierno et al., (2010), reported that 1 in 10 older adults have experienced some type of abuse or neglect. The pharmacist’s role in addressing elder abuse is critical, but little is known about their understanding of the issue.

The purpose of this project was two-fold. First to assess the perceptions and knowledge of students enrolled in the College of Pharmacy at Idaho State University (ISU) related to elder abuse. Secondly, to serve as an educational tool by providing explanations of correct responses and guidance on how to respond to suspected abuse.

Research Methods

The study was conducted using a web-based survey distributed to a convenience sample of 94 students enrolled in the College of Pharmacy at ISU during Spring Semester 2014. The survey was developed and distributed with the assistance of a faculty member and student from the College of Pharmacy at ISU. All study procedures were approved by the ISU Institutional Review Board.

The first portion of the survey asked students to report their demographics and related characteristics (age, gender, year in school, previous experience, etc.). The second section of the survey included three questions about elder abuse, a pre- and post -survey level of knowledge assessment, and a caregiver scenario.

Research conducted in collaboration with  
Dr Barb Mason and Kristen Williams,  
College of Pharmacy at Idaho State University.

Results

Table 1 Participant Demographics		
	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	32	39%
Female	51	61%
<b>Age</b>		
21-24	16	19%
25-27	26	31%
28-31	15	18%
32-45	20	24%
<b>Current Campus</b>		
Boise	40	48%
Pocatello	38	46%
<b>Academic Standing</b>		
P-1	15	18%
P-2	21	25%
P-3	22	26%
P-4	25	30%
<b>Prior Healthcare Experience</b>		
Less Than 1 Year	45	54%
2-4 Years	24	29%
4-6 Years	10	12%
6-10 Years	7	8%
More Than 10 Years	3	4%

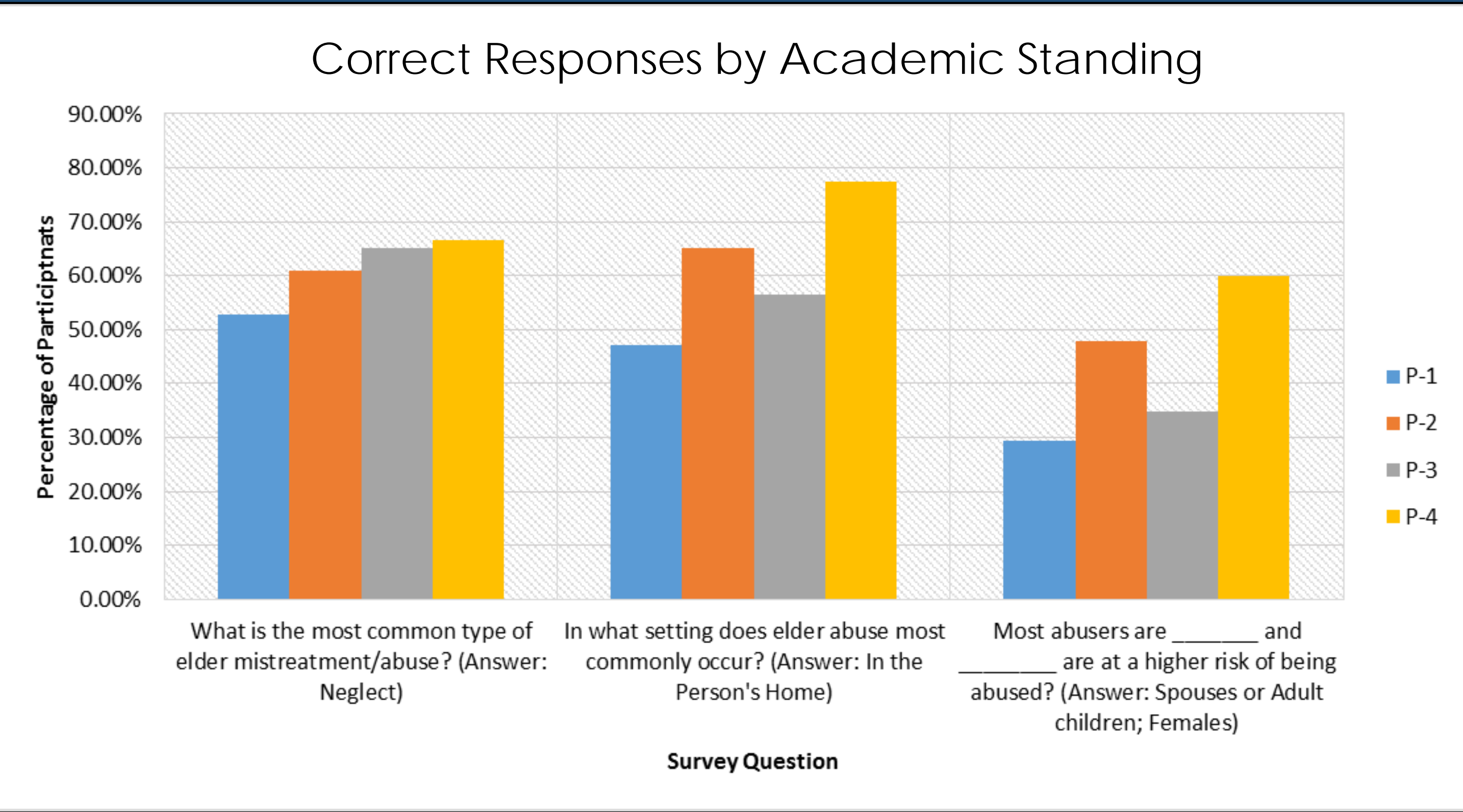
*Note.* Totals for n do not add to sample size of 84 due to missing data incomplete responses.

Table 2

Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Level of Knowledge Before and After Taking the Survey

Outcome	Pre-Survey Score		Post-Survey Score			95% CI for Mean Difference		r	t	df
	M	SD	M	SD	n					
	4.44	2.2	7.24	1.53	84	2.33, 3.26		0.262	11.99	83

p < .001



Results

All of the students invited to complete the survey responded with 89% (n=84) completing all of the survey items. Findings revealed a statistically significant difference (p=.001) between participant pre- and post-level of perceived knowledge about elder abuse. No correlations were found between this change in confidence and age, academic standing, campus location, or prior healthcare experience. Students were also asked to respond to three questions about elder abuse. No statistically significant correlations were found between the number of correct responses and age, academic standing, campus location, or prior healthcare experience.

Conclusions

The relatively low levels of knowledge reported in this study demonstrate a need for more content about elder abuse in the curriculum offered by the College of Pharmacy at ISU. In addition, the positive impact of educational component of the survey suggests this format may be an effective means of delivering information about elder abuse.

Further research on the knowledge of elder abuse among other health-related professionals is needed. A more rigorous study design, i.e., use of a comparison group should also be implemented to evaluate the efficacy of the survey as an educational strategy.

References

Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. American Journal Of Public Health, 100(2), 292-297